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# Security Council

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## Letter dated 26 September 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to draw your attention to document S/2005/602 which contains a letter from the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco directly or tacitly implicating Algeria in some aspects of the Western Sahara conflict.

Caught in the act of repressing Sahrawi civilian populations and accused by non-governmental organizations and the international news media of grave crimes and acts of torture against Sahrawi political prisoners, the Kingdom of Morocco has reacted in the same manner an any occupying or colonial power would by cordoning off the territory which it has been occupying illegally since 1975 and prohibiting non-governmental organizations, the media, outside observers and parliamentarians from entering or expelling them from the territory in question by military force.

Furthermore again, like occupying or colonial powers that are confronted and accused, the Kingdom of Morocco complains of manipulation, asserting that photographs widely disseminated by the international media portraying the heinous treatment of Sahrawi prisoners by notorious torturers are only montages and claiming that the prisoners identified by Amnesty International as political prisoners are merely common drug traffickers.

Lastly, acting as would any occupying or colonial power singled out on the international stage for its policy of oppression and repression, rather than acknowledging the crimes committed against the Sahrawi people for three decades, the Kingdom of Morocco resorts to diatribes against its Algerian neighbour, which is accused of every possible wrong.

Moreover, whereas the Kingdom of Morocco expresses compassion for the plight of its former prisoners of war, every one of whom has now been released, it seeks to detract attention from the fact that for years, on the pretext that the "case was closed", it had chosen to ignore their very existence; it also tries to conceal the fact that their release took so long precisely because of the never-ending vagaries and about-turns of the Kingdom of Morocco concerning, on the one hand, the referendum for self-determination, the holding of which required the prior release of all prisoners in accordance with the terms of the United Nations Settlement Plan for Western Sahara, negotiated and agreed to by the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO and approved by the Security Council, and, on the other hand, the Peace Plan for Self-determination of the People of Western Sahara unanimously supported by the Security Council, "after the effective date [of which] all political prisoners and prisoners of war shall be released, and the obligation of each party in this regard is not dependent upon performance by the other".

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With respect to the "thousands of Moroccan civilians who are still in the camps", over whom the Kingdom of Morocco is now expressing concern, it should be recalled that they involve Sahrawi refugees, duly identified by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who have had no other choice but to flee abroad as their homeland was being invaded and occupied by the Kingdom of Morocco and to whom Algeria has generously offered asylum, as it has done for other persecuted persons from Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America, and who are confidently awaiting the day when they might return home in freedom and dignity.

Meanwhile, among the Sahrawi in question, thousands are settled in territories which have not been occupied by Morocco, and many have been sheltered by Algeria at the explicit request of the international organizations concerned.

In fact, the thinness of Morocco's statement stems from its inability to explain to the international community why it is keeping an entire people under occupation and why, against the unanimous will of that same community, it continues to deny this people the right to self-determination and to reject the various United Nations peace plans after having accepted them. Algeria, for its part, remains calm and certain that it is on the side of right and justice, and is confident that, sooner or later, the people of Western Sahara will exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

Given the very serious situation prevailing in Western Sahara, where 151 prisoners of war and several hundred Sahrawi civilians are still reported missing, while for strictly humanitarian reasons the Frente POLISARIO itself has released every single Moroccan prisoner of war, and where 37 political prisoners have been holding a hunger strike since 8 August 2005 to obtain political prisoner status, the Security Council must make an urgent appeal to the Kingdom of Morocco, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, concerning the fate of Sahrawi civilians who have disappeared as well as the unbearable plight of the 37 political prisoners whose lives are now in danger.

Furthermore, through the extension of the appointment of Ambassador Peter van Walsum as the successor to Mr. James Baker as the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, the Security Council wished to reiterate strongly the need to implement the Peace Plan for Self-determination of the People of Western Sahara and, since this involves bringing about the decolonization of a non-self-governing territory within the meaning of the Charter of the United Nations, to urge the occupying Power to comply with international law concerning the sanctity of the principle of equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination. The Security Council, which clearly pointed the way towards that goal in resolution 1495 (2003), must not allow the Kingdom of Morocco to stall progress indefinitely, paralyse the activities of our Organization and frustrate all the hopes of the international community at a time when it is meeting to celebrate the principles, purposes and ideals of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Abdallah **Baali**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative